UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

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NAME		1		
HISTORIC				
<u> </u>	ed S tates Post Offi	ce		
AND/OR COMMON Unit	ed States Post Offi	ce		
LOCATION	I			<u></u> -
STREET & NUMBER				
901 Broad	way		N/Anot for publication	
CITY, TOWN			CONGRESSIONAL DISTR	ICT
Nashville	<u> </u>	LAVICINITY OF	5th	
STATE Tennessee		CODE 047	county Davidson	CODE 037
CLASSIFIC	ATION			·-
CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRES	ENT USE
DISTRICT	X _{PUBLIC}	X_OCCUPIED	AGRICULTURE	MUSEUM
\underline{X} BUILDING(S)	PRIVATE	UNOCCUPIED	COMMERCIAL	PARK
STRUCTURE	вотн	WORK IN PROGRESS	EDUCATIONAL	PRIVATE RESIDEN
SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION		ENTERTAINMENT	RELIGIOUS
OBJECT	N/A PROCESS	X_YES: RESTRICTED	X GOVERNMENT	SCIENTIFIC
	BEING CONSIDERED	YES: UNRESTRICTED NO	INDUSTRIAL MILITARY	TRANSPORTATION
AGENCY				
REGIONAL HEADQUA Memphis F	rters: <i>(If applicable)</i> ield Real Estate and	d Buildings Office,	United States Po	stal Service
STREET & NUMBER				
P.O. Draw	er 3744			
CITY, TOWN	N/A	A	STATE	
Memphis		- VICINITY OF	Tenness	ee
LOCATION	OF LEGAL DESC	RIPTION		
COURTHOUSE. REGISTRY OF DEEDS, E	ETC. Davidson County	Courthouse		
STREET & NUMBER	Public Square			
CITY, TOWN		······································	STATE	
	Nashville		Tennesse	e
REPRESEN	TATION IN EXIST	TING SURVEYS		
TITLE				
N/A				
DATE N/A		N/A_federal _s	STATECOUNTYLOCAL	
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS	N/A			
CITY, TOWN			STATE	
N/A			N/A	

CONDITION

CHECK ONE

CHECK ONE

XEXCELLENT __GOOD

__FAIR

__DETERIORATED
__RUINS
__UNEXPOSED

 $\underline{\underline{\underline{X}}}_{\text{ALTERED}}$

X ORIGINAL SITE
__MOVED DATE_____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Nashville Main Post Office is a large two-story stone, concrete and steel frame structure located at 901 Broadway in Nashville, Tennessee. The building was constructed under the direction of the Works Progress Administration and has housed the city's main postal facilities since its completion in 1934. Designed by the Nashville architectural firm of Marr and Holman, the building is an excellent example of the Art Deco style. It is also notable for the Art Deco detailing in its lobby which is one of the most lavish and significant in the downtown area. Few alterations have occurred to the building and it retains its original character.

The Nashville Post Office was constructed on an entire city block which is bounded by Broadway, McGavock Street, Ninth Avenue and Tenth Avenue with the main facade facing Broadway. The building measures 250' in length and 182' in width with the two main floors and basement containing 147,000 square feet. The building occupies the majority of the block with landscaped grass plots located on the Broadway facade and a large driveway and loading area at the rear of the building facing McGavock Street. A concrete block loading platform and one-story addition were both added adjacent to the driveway and loading area in 1957. No other buildings are located on the lot.

The Post Office is one of the city's best examples of the Art Moderne style which was popular between 1925 and 1940. It was designed by architects Marr and Holman of Nashville who designed many other buildings in the Moderne style throughout Tennessee. The building is horizontal in appearance and features massive marble fluted pilasters on all four facades. Facing Broadway are the two main entrances to the building which display fluted pilasters topped by marble eagles. Both the exterior and interior is characteristic of the Art Deco style. The lobby and hallways contain a variety of ornate geometric detailing executed in marble, aluminum and plaster. Most of the major spaces in the building also have retained the fixtures, lights and window grilles original to the building.

The north elevation of the building facing Broadway is thirteen bays in width and is the main facade of the structure. The two bays containing the main entrances project from the main block of the structure. These entrances have a black polished granite surround flanked by marble fluted pilasters with stylized eagle capitals. The entrance is composed of four glass and aluminum doors with a transom bar and large transom. The transom displays opaque glass concealed behind an ornate aluminum grille. Flanking each entrance are two original Art Deco light fixtures. The building rests on a granite foundation and a granite retaining wall runs the circumference of the structure. Between the two entrances on the main facade is an open promenade, retaining wall and flagpole.

Form No. 10-300a (Rev. 10-74)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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Nashville Post Office CONTINUATION SHEET

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PAGE 2

Between the main entrances are nine bays of windows separated by fluted pilasters with simple capitals displaying a stylized egg and dart motif design. The windows are original two and four light casement design with decorative aluminum spandrel panels between the first and second floors. Windows above the main entrances and on the corner bays are also of multi-light casement design. This window motif is repeated on all four facades of the building with few variations. Above the second story window level is a decorative belt course of floriated design which extends on all facades of the building. On the projecting entrance bays are four stalklike pilasters which extend from the second story to the roofline. At the roofline is a frieze with floriated decoration and inset antefix designs. Below the frieze on the Broadway facade is the inscription "United States Post Office".

The east, west and south elevations of the building are ten to twelve bays in length and the upper facade decoration, pilasters and window configuration are similar in appearance to the main facade. The only variation is found on the west facade which originally featured a loading dock at the southwest corner and an elevated bridge leading to Union Station. The elevated bridge has been removed and the opening enclosed with marble panels. At the southwest corner an extension of the original loading platform was constructed in 1957 and a new bridge to the railroad station added. The south elevation is also twelve bays in width and the ground story has large frame and glass double doors which lead to an asphalt loading platform. Above the platform is a fixed metal canopy which extends across both the original and added loading docks. At the southeast corner of the building is a one-story concrete block structure added in 1957.

The interior of the building has retained much of its original detailing. The most important space is the lobby which displays significant Art Deco designs of aluminum, marble and plaster. Floors in the lobby are composed of multi-colored terrazzo and marble laid in zig zag and geometric designs. The walls of the lobby feature floor to ceiling sheathing of light marble. Above the interior door and window bays are large aluminum grilles of floriated and wave design which cover opaque glass transoms. Each grille weighs over one ton and features stylized aluminum panels representing transportation modes and symbols of professions of the period. Doors leading to interior offices in the lobby are of aluminum with inset Art Deco panels. The plaster ceiling has many different colors and is designed in circular and elliptical forms.

The first and second floors are connected by several staircases and elevators. The most significant of these spaces are the two stairs adjacent to the foyers

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Nashville Post Office

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7

PAGE 3

by the main entrances. These stairwells have green marble stairs and platforms with aluminum handrails, gray marble wainscoting and plaster ceilings with elliptical and circular molding. On the second floor are fourteen offices. A large work room of 21,000 square feet is also located on this floor. Originally six large skylights on the roof provided illumination into the work room but these were removed in the early 1950s and the openings sealed.

Throughout its fifty year history the Post Office has undergone remodeling several times but these alterations have not occurred to the main facades. The majority of changes have occurred in the work room areas and the rear loading and parking sections. The major facades of the structure still retain their original appearance as does the lobby. The Post Office remains one of Nashville's best and most intact examples of the Art Deco style.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

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1500-1599	AGRICULTURE	ECONOMICS	LITERATURE	SCULPTURE
1600-1699	XARCHITECTURE	EDUCATION	MILITARY	SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
1700-1799	ART	ENGINEERING	MUSIC .	THEATER
1800-1899	COMMERCE	EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	PHILOSOPHY	TRANSPORTATION
X.1900-	<u>X</u> COMMUNICATIONS	INDUSTRY	X_POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	_OTHER (SPECIEV)
		INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

PERIOD

1932-1934

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Marr and Holman, Architects

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The United States Post Office located in Nashville, Tennessee is an architecturally and historically significant structure of the early 20th century. The building has been nominated under criteria A and C because of its role in Nashville history and architectural design. The building was designed by the Nashville architectural firm of Marr and Holman and completed in 1934. Built in the Art Deco style the building has significant detailing in its interior spaces. It is one of the few Art Deco style structures constructed in Nashville and retains its original character and appearance.

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE .. CHECK AND JUSTIEV BELOW

Nashville's first post office was opened in 1796 on the public square during the early development of the city. Tradition places the first post office in the store of John Gordon who also served as postmaster. From 1796 until the late 19th century the post office moved to several locations including the corner of Third Avenue and Union Street and various stores on the public square with over twenty postmasters serving during this period. After 1877 the post office was located in the United States Post Office and Customs House located at 701 Broadway. The post office operated in this building for over fifty years but by the late 1920s it became obvious that a new facility was needed.

Through the Works Progress Administration many new buildings for federal, state and city governments were constructed throughout the country. In the early 1930s Nashville Postmaster Ollie F. Minton lobbied hard to get the city a new post office and he recieved the support of several Tennessee congressman. Over one million dollars was finally appropriated for the construction of the new facility and a lot comprising a city block was purchased adjacent to Union Station.

Selected as architects was the firm of Marr and Holman of Nashville. Marr and Holman was a major architectural firm of the early 20th century in Tennessee with extensive experience designing large commercial and governmental buildings. Among their best known works in Nashville is the Sudekum Building, the Federal Reserve Bank and the Tennessee Supreme Court Building. They were one of the few Nashville firms to retain a large staff during the Depression and they designed many WPA financed courthouses and other governmental buildings in the state during the 1930s.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See continuation sheets

10 GEOGRAPHICAL	DATA		
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11 FORM PREPARED) BY		
NAME / TITLE	, 5 -		
Philip Thomaso	n		05/10/84
ORGANIZATION	11		DATE
Thomason and A	cennistae		
STREET & NUMBER	SSUCTACES		(615) 320-5732 TELEPHONE
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evaluate its significance. The eva	aluated level of significance i	isNational)State	teLocal.
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FOR NPS USE ONLY			
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS	S PROPERTY IS INCLUDED	IN THE NATIONAL REG	ISTER
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DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCH	EOLOGY AND HISTORIC PE	RESERVATION	
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Nashville Post Office CONTINUATION SHEET

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The design for the building reflected the Art Deco style of the period which was characterized by a horizontal appearance, sleek lines and minimal exterior decoration. Interior detailing was ornate by comparison with Art Deco designs executed in marble, plaster and aluminum. Georgia white marble was used on the exterior of the building while the interior contained multi-colored marble from Tennessee. The contractor for the building was the Frank Messer Company of Cincinnatti. Construction of the building began in 1932 and the building was completed in November of 1934.

Upon completion the building was regarded as one of the most modern and efficient postal facilities in the country. In the basement was a large work area and boilers for the coal fired steam heat system. On the first floor was a large public lobby with hundreds of post office boxes and the offices of the postmaster, superintendant of mails and other official posts. The main postal work area contained over 23,000 square feet which opened onto loading docks at the rear of the building. Mail was delivered to the loading docks via both trucks and by rail. On the second floor was another large work area and the offices of postal inspectors and accountants.

On November 18, 1934 an open house was held at the Post Office for public inspection. Thousands of Nashvillians turned out for the open house which was hosted by Mayor Hillary Howse and South Carolina congressman Joseph Byrns who assisted in passing the appropriation for the building. Postmaster William Gupton who replaced Ollie Minton in 1933 greeted guests as they inspected the facility. Music for the public was furnished by the Postal Carriers band which played in the lobby. On November 27 the postal officials completed the move from the old facility and the new building officially opened at 9:30 A.M.

For the past fifty years the post office on Broadway has served as the city's main postal facility. Many branch offices have been constructed throughout the city but the main post office still handles the bulk of Nashville's mail. Minor alterations have occurred to the building in past years the most significant being the addition of a new loading dock and one-story structure at the rear of the building in 1957. With these few changes the Nashville Post Office continues to display its original architectural character on both the exterior and interior spaces. The post office is one of the few buildings in Nashville designed in the Art Deco style and its lobby is one of the most ornate spaces in the city. The building's role in the community and its architectural design makes the Nashville Post Office a significant local structure in the city.

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Nashville Post Office CONTINUATION SHEET

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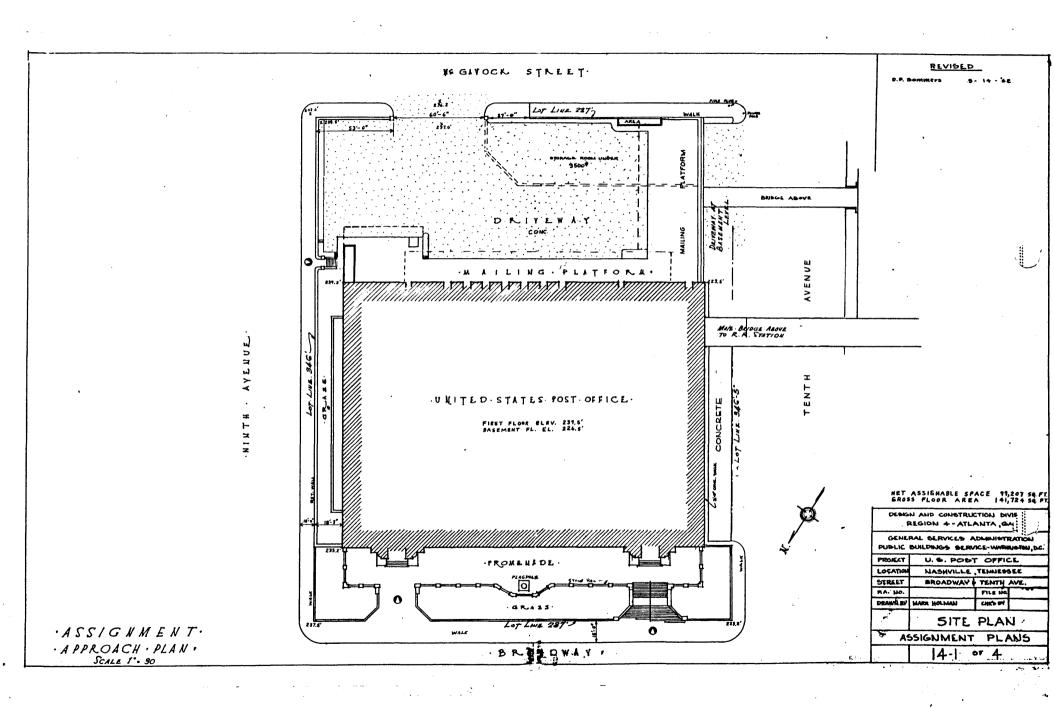
PAGE 1

Bibliography

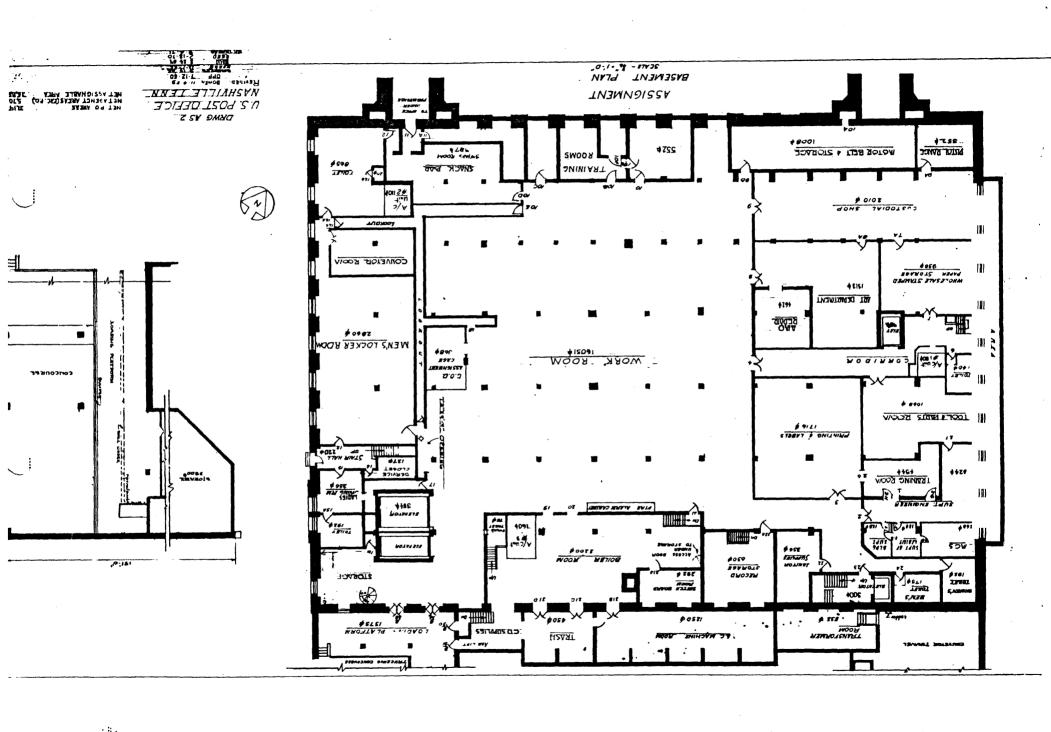
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Nashville Banner, 18, November, 1934; 19, November, 1934.

Nashville Tennessean, 27, November, 1934.



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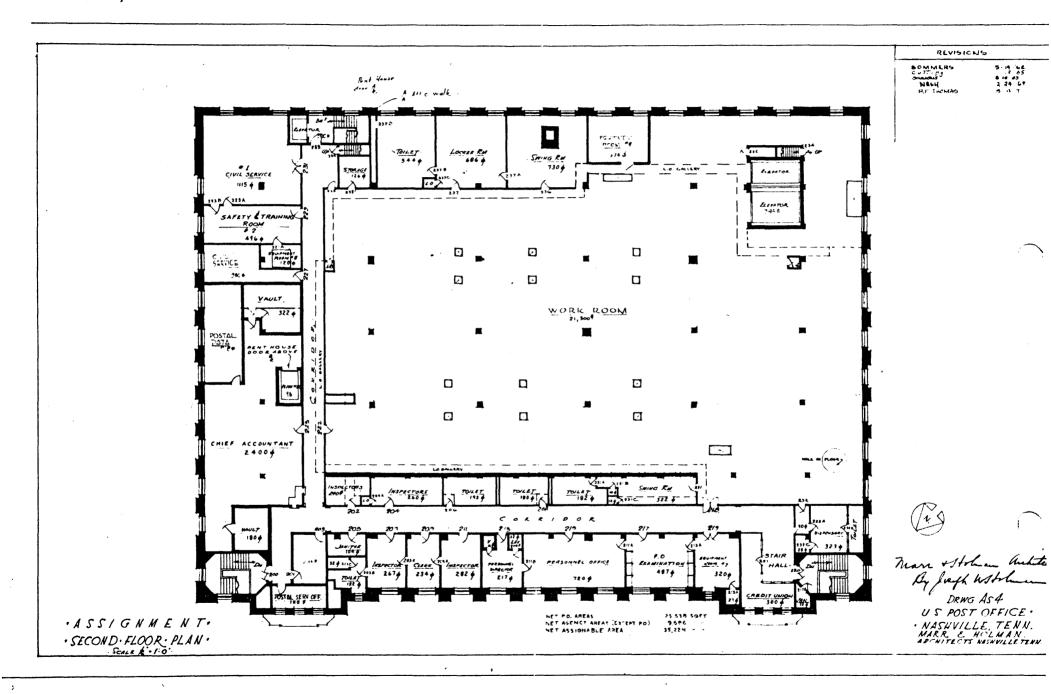
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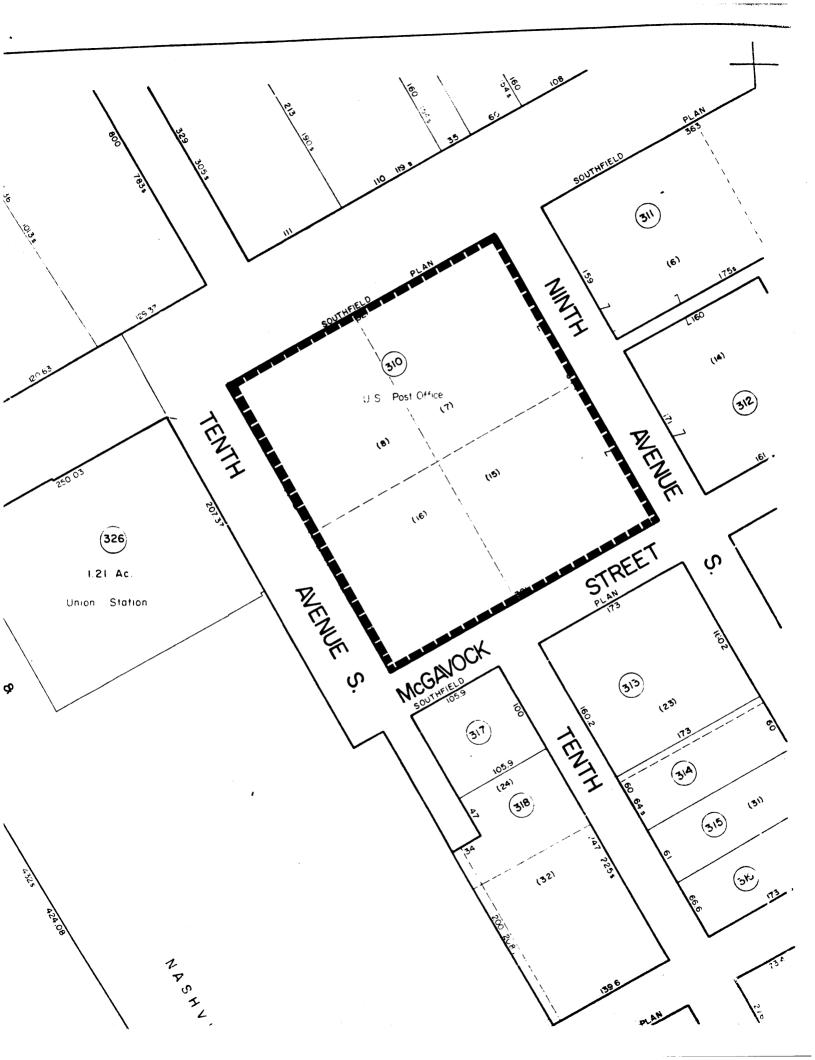
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Site Number	
County Davi	dson

	Marr and Holman Buildings in Downtown	nash	ville (1922-1936) Thematic Resources
IDENTIFICATION	Historic name: - U.S. Post Office Common name: N/A Address: 901 Broadway Nashville, TN 37203 Owner's name: U.S. Postal Service Owner's address: 901 Broadway Nashville, TN 37202 Classification: Building Tax map reference: 93-9-310 Davidson County Acreage: 2.5 acres UTM reference: 16/519415/4001260	STATUS	Open to public: Yes X No Restricted X Visible from road: Yes X No Occupied: Yes X No Present use: Post Office Current condition: Excellent Alterations: Minor remodeling of second floor offices. Site features: The building sits on a city lot and is bounded by Broadway, McGavock Street and Ninth and Tenth Avenues.
HISTORY	Date of construction: 1933-1934 Architect/builder: Marr and Holman Nashville, TN Original or previous owners: U.S. Postal Service Original use: Post Office Theme/s: Primary Architecture Secondary Politics/Government Other N/A	SOURCES	Form prepared by: Philip Thomason Title: Architectural historian Organization: Thomason and Associates Nashville, TN Date: 4/84
	The United States Post Office is an ou	ıtsta	nding example of the Art Deco style in

The United States Post Office is an outstanding example of the Art Deco style in Nashville. Completed in 1934, it is considered one of the best designs executed by Marr and Holman. The building is two stories in height with a full basement and follows an interior arrangement of space standardized by the Postal Service in the early 1930s. The Broadway facade displays fluted pilasters with simple rectangular capitals. This facade also features two extended bays containing the main entrances to the building. These entrances feature a dark marble surround, aluminum grillwork and marble pilasters surmounted by eagles. Windows are both fixed and operable multi-light casement arranged in vertical strips. Upper facade decoration is limited to stalk like pilasters over the main entrance, running fret bands and antefix motifs at the roofline. The main

The United States Post Office is an important landmark on Broadway Avenue in Nashville. This Works Progress Administration project was completed in 1934 at a cost of \$1,585,000. Money was secured for the Post office in 1932 after a hard fight in Congress. Marr and Holman were selected as architects and their design for the building is considered one of their finest. It is an excellent example of the Art Deco style. The exterior was faced Georgia marble while the interior displayed intricate designs of Tennessee and Pennsylvania marble and elaborate metalwork. The building has horizontal proportions with

DESCRIPTION

PHOTOGRAPHIC DATA						
Photographer: Thomason and Assoc.						
Date: April, 1984						
Negatives on file: Thomason and Assoc.						
Nashville, TN						
Photographer facing: SE						
Photograph number 16-18 of 21.						
CONTINUATION						

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SITE PLAN - Include North Arrow	
Broadway	\Box
Post Office	Nint Avenue
McGavock Street	
McGavock Street	

•

Marr and Holman Buildings in Downtown Nashville (1922-1936) Thematic Resources

U. S. Post Office

Description continued:

lobby of the building is one of the most significant interior spaces in Nashville. Large amounts of Tennessee and Pennsylvania marble were incorporated to create multi-colored geometric banding. Excellent workmanship is also found in the Art Deco aluminum grilles and doors. The majority of the original light fixtures are intact as is the intricate ceiling decoration. Few alterations have occurred to the interior and exterior of the Post Office.

Significance continued:

restrained ornamentation while the interior is an elaborate expression of ornate marble and metalwork. Since the building's completion in 1934 it has served as Nashville's main post office. This building was nominated individually to the National Register by the United States Postal Service and was listed on November 15, 1984.

